United Nations ST/SGB/2007/5

Secretariat

12 February 2007

Secretary-General's bulletin

Record-keeping and the management of United Nations archives

The Secretary-General, for the purpose of ensuring the effective and efficient management of United Nations records and archives, promulgates the following:

Section 1
Definitions

The following definitions shall apply for the purposes of the present bulletin. Several of the definitions come from section 1 of Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/2004/15, on the use of information and communication technology (ICT) resources and data, and are repeated here for convenience:

(a) *Archives*: records to be permanently preserved for their administrative, fiscal, legal, historical or informational value;[1]

(b) *Authorized user*: any staff member who is authorized to use ICT resources;

(c) *Disposition*: the action taken with regard to non-current records following their appraisal, including transfer to secondary storage, or destruction;

(d) *Electronic record*: a record that consists of ICT data and that has:

(i) *Structure*: the format of the electronic record and any links to attachments or other related documents;

(ii) *Content*: the information contained in the structure of the electronic record conveying the evidence of the transaction;

(iii) *Context*: the information documenting the source in terms of the transaction to which it relates, such as creator, date, security and access, language, disposal and format of the electronic record, and which is normally separated in the structure from the content;

[1] For the purposes of the present bulletin, the archives of the United Nations are those of the United Nations Organization, regardless of physical location, and archives of pre-existing organizations for which the Secretariat is custodian, paper-based and electronic records that should be preserved because of their administrative, fiscal, legal, historical or informational value as evidence of the official business of the United Nations.

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(e) *E-mail or electronic mail records*: any messages created, sent or received within an e-mail system during the course of official business;

(f) *ICT resource*: any tangible or intangible asset capable of generating, transmitting, receiving, processing or representing data in electronic form, where the asset is owned, licensed, operated, managed or made available by, or otherwise used by, the United Nations;

(g) *ICT data*: any data or information, regardless of form or medium, which are or have been electronically generated by, transmitted via, received by, processed by or represented in an ICT resource;

(h) *Non-current record*: any data or information no longer needed for daily use in the transaction of official business but to be retained for a fixed period of time;

(i) *Official use*: use of ICT resources by an authorized user in the discharge of his or her official functions and within the scope of his or her authorization;

(j) *Record (or official record)*: any data or information, regardless of form or medium, maintained by the United Nations as evidence of a transaction;

(k) *Record-keeping*: making, maintaining and disposing of complete, accurate and reliable evidence of transactions in the form of records;

(l) *Retention schedule*: a comprehensive instruction developed by a department or an office covering the disposition of records to ensure that they are retained for as long as necessary based on their administrative, fiscal, legal, historical or informational value;

(m) *Transaction*: act by a staff member using an ICT resource in the discharge of his or her official functions;

(n) *Transitory record*: any data or information required for only a limited time to ensure the completion of a routine action or the preparation of a subsequent record;

(o) *Vital record*: any data or information essential for the ongoing functioning of the Organization and without which the Organization could not continue to function effectively or without which it could not ensure business continuity in the event of a disaster; information necessary to protect the rights and interests of the Organization, its staff and those who interact with it.

Section 2
Purpose and scope

The present bulletin sets out the rules and procedures to be followed in respect of the creation, management and disposition of records, electronic records, archives and non-current records of the United Nations. It also sets out the procedures regarding access to United Nations archives and non-current records. The bulletin should be read in conjunction with Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/2007/6, on information sensitivity, classification and handling.

Section 3
Responsibilities of staff members

3.1 All records, including electronic records and e-mail records, created or received by a staff member in connection with or as a result of the official work of the United Nations, are the property of the United Nations.

3.2 Staff members shall not alter, destroy, misplace or render useless any official document, record or file that is intended to be kept as a record of the Organization. Staff members are permitted to destroy documents and records in keeping with the provisions of retention policy guidelines that have been approved by the Archives and Records Management Section.

3.3 Prior to separation from service, staff members shall make arrangements for transferring to the Archives and Records Management Section or to the office with delegated authority, those records in their possession which are no longer required for business purposes and shall not remove any records from United Nations premises. The Chief of the Archives and Records Management Section may provide advice regarding the records of a staff member prior to separation from service. Staff members shall be entitled to have a reasonable number of unrestricted records copied at their own expense and to retain their private papers. Guidelines concerning the separation of private papers from business records are set out in the annex to the present bulletin.

Section 4
Responsibilities of departments and offices

4.1 Departments and offices shall develop and implement a policy regarding the retention of their records, including transitory records, through a records retention schedule subject to approval by the Archives and Records Management Section. Records retention schedules shall provide for accountable and transparent record-keeping, insofar as they shall identify minimum retention periods for records to meet administrative, fiscal and legal requirements; they shall also identify records to be retained as archives of the Organization. United Nations records that are not covered by an approved retention policy must not be destroyed.

4.2 Prior to transferring their records to the Archives and Records Management Section, departments and offices shall prepare them for transfer in accordance with the format established by the Chief of the Archives and Records Management Section.

4.3 With the exception of transitory records, departments and offices may not dispose of records in their possession without specific authorization in a retention schedule or the signed authorization of the Chief of the Archives and Records Management Section.

4.4 Departments and offices authorized to retain non-current records beyond the normal period for the conduct of their official business shall establish suitable conditions for the maintenance and preservation of those records, in accordance with standards approved by the Archives and Records Management Section.

4.5 Departments and offices shall develop procedures to identify and manage their vital records as part of overall Secretariat disaster recovery and business continuity

planning, in keeping with the guidelines to identify vital records established by the Archives and Records Management Section.

4.6 Departments and offices shall respond to requests for access to and declassification of records made by units.

4.7 In the event of the closure of a department or office, including field operations, its archives and records shall be transferred to the Archives and Records Management Section, in accordance with procedures established for that purpose.

Section 5
Responsibilities of the Archives and Records Management Section

5.1 The Archives and Records Management Section shall be responsible for establishing policy and setting standards, including the design of record-keeping systems and procedures for the management of the records and archives of the United Nations, including their use, storage, retention and disposition and access rights. The Archives and Records Management Section shall also establish policy and standards for the structure, content and context of electronic records, in order to ensure that they are accurately created and captured in their integrity and preserved without alteration and remain accessible for as long as the electronic record is retained.

5.2 In consultation with the originating office, the Archives and Records Management Section shall determine, by a system of appraisal, which records have sufficient historical or other value to warrant their continued preservation as archives of the United Nations.

5.3 The Archives and Records Management Section shall develop procedures to facilitate the appropriate identification, handling and management of sensitive records to prevent unauthorized use and/or disclosure of sensitive information and to control authorized disclosure of sensitive information issued by the United Nations, in accordance with Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/2007/6, on information sensitivity, classification and handling.

5.4 Although the daily responsibility for maintenance of all records rests with the various departments and offices, the Chief of the Archives and Records Management Section, or his or her representative, may inspect existing records management systems and prescribe changes and/or improvements in those systems as may be required.

5.5 The Archives and Records Management Section shall undertake the transfer from departments and offices, to its premises or delegated premises away from Headquarters, archives and non-current records which are more than three years old. In exceptional cases, where shorter or longer retention periods are deemed desirable, a schedule mutually agreed upon by the Archives and Records Management Section and the departments and offices concerned may be established.

5.6 With the authorization of the departments and offices concerned, the Archives and Records Management Section shall dispose of non-current records that have no further administrative, fiscal, legal, historical or informational value.

Section 6
Electronic records

6.1 Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/2004/15, on the use of information and communication technology resources and data, defines appropriate uses of information technology and related resources and data. Electronic records created or managed using a United Nations ICT resource shall be subject to the requirements for record-keeping set forth in the present bulletin, including their capture in electronic record-keeping systems; if such a system is not yet available, electronic records must be captured and maintained in an alternative record-keeping system, for example, one that is paper-based.

6.2 E-mail has become an important business and communication tool in the United Nations and many of the e-mail messages created and received by the Organization constitute records because they provide evidence of and information about its business transactions. Departments and offices shall ensure that e-mail records are identified, managed and stored in accordance with the requirements for record-keeping set forth in the present bulletin. Departments and offices shall be required to develop and disseminate guidelines, in keeping with business process and practice, to prescribe appropriate use of e-mail systems as a means of official communication.

Section 7
Access of staff members to non-current records and United Nations archives

7.1 Staff members shall have access to archives and non-current records necessary to conduct their official business, subject to the terms and conditions established by the Secretary-General.

7.2 Records on which the Secretary-General or his authorized representatives have imposed restrictions may be declassified at any time by the same authority. Records that remain restricted when transferred to the Archives and Records Management Section will be declassified automatically or be subject to a declassification review when 20 years old. Those remaining restricted after 20 years shall undergo further declassification reviews at five-year intervals.

Section 8
Final provisions

8.1 The provisions of the present bulletin shall not apply to the record-keeping and management of records specifically covered in other Secretary-General's bulletins, other administrative issuances promulgated by the Secretary-General or legal undertakings made by the Organization to third parties.

8.2 Administrative instruction ST/AI/326, on the United Nations archives, is hereby abolished.

8.3 The present bulletin shall enter into force on 15 February 2007.

(*Signed*) **Ban** Ki-moon
Secretary-General

Annex

Guidelines concerning the separation of private papers from business records

1. The purpose of the present annex is to provide guidelines for the separation of staff members' private papers from business records.

2. Records created or received by staff members in connection with, or as a result of, the official work of the United Nations are the property of the United Nations.

3. The following categories of records are considered private papers of staff members:

(a) Personal notes and diaries;

(b) Surplus copies of non-classified United Nations printed documents;

(c) Personal correspondence with no connection to a staff member's official functions, even though filed in a Secretariat office, including social invitations, acknowledgements, correspondence lists and other purely social matters.

4. Upon retirement, staff members may remove the private papers specified in paragraph 3 above.

United Nations ST/SGB/2007/6

Secretariat

12 February 2007

Secretary-General's bulletin

Information sensitivity, classification and handling

The Secretary-General, for the purposes of ensuring the classification and secure handling of confidential information entrusted to or originating from the United Nations, promulgates the following:

Section 1
Classification principles

1.1 The overall approach to classifying information entrusted to or originating from the United Nations is based on the understanding that the work of the United Nations should be open and transparent, except insofar as the nature of information concerned is deemed confidential in accordance with the guidelines set out in the present bulletin.

1.2 Information deemed sensitive shall include the following:

(a) Documents created by the United Nations, received from or sent to third parties, under an expectation of confidentiality;

(b) Documents whose disclosure is likely to endanger the safety or security of any individual, violate his or her rights or invade his or her privacy;

(c) Documents whose disclosure is likely to endanger the security of Member States or prejudice the security or proper conduct of any operation or activity of the United Nations, including any of its peacekeeping operations;

(d) Documents covered by legal privilege or related to internal investigations;

(e) Internal inter-office or intra-office documents, including draft documents, if disclosure would undermine the Organization's free and independent decision-making process;

(f) Documents containing commercial information, if disclosure would harm either the financial interests of the United Nations or those of other parties involved;

(g) Other kinds of information, which because of their content or the circumstances of their creation or communication must be deemed confidential.

1.3 Classifications should be used judiciously and only in cases where disclosure of the information may be detrimental to the proper functioning of the United

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Nations or the welfare and safety of its staff or third parties or violate the Organization's legal obligations. In such cases, the procedures set out below should be strictly observed to ensure that such information is not compromised either purposely or inadvertently.

Section 2
Classification levels

2.1 Sensitive information may be classified as "confidential" or "strictly confidential".

2.2 The designation "confidential" shall apply to information or material whose unauthorized disclosure could reasonably be expected to cause damage to the work of the United Nations.

2.3 The designation "strictly confidential" shall apply to information or material whose unauthorized disclosure could reasonably be expected to cause exceptionally grave damage to or impede the conduct of the work of the United Nations.

2.4 The designation "unclassified" shall apply to information or material whose unauthorized disclosure could reasonably be expected not to cause damage to the work of the United Nations.

Section 3
Identification and markings

3.1 The originator of the information concerned, or its recipient if the information is received from an outside source, under the overall supervision and guidance of the head of department or office, shall decide whether the information is sensitive and mark it with the appropriate classification as detailed in section 4 below.

3.2 Where information from an external source contains prior sensitivity markings, it shall retain those markings or shall be assigned a classification that provides a degree of protection greater than or equal to that of the entity that furnished the information.

3.3 The originator of the information concerned, or its recipient if the information is received from an outside source, under the overall supervision and guidance of the head of department or office, shall, whenever practicable, indicate on the document in question when classified information constitutes a small portion of an otherwise unclassified document.

Section 4
Declassification

4.1 The originator of the information concerned, or its recipient if the information is received from an outside source, under the overall supervision and guidance of the head of department or office, shall, where appropriate, establish and mark on the document in question a date or an event which will trigger declassification. Upon reaching the date or event, the information shall be declassified automatically. The date or event shall not exceed the time frame established in paragraph 4.3 of this section.

4.2 If no date or event for declassification was specified, information may be declassified at any time by the originator or its recipient if the information is

received from an outside source, by the Secretary-General or by such officials as the Secretary-General so authorizes.

4.3 Review for possible declassification shall take place before records are transferred to the custody of the Archives and Records Management Section, in accordance with Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/2007/5, on record-keeping and the management of United Nations archives. Subject to the provisions of any other applicable administrative rule or any applicable legal undertaking on the part of the Organization, classified records that have been transferred to the Archives and Records Management Section maintaining their original classification, shall be declassified as follows:

(a) Records that are classified as "strictly confidential" shall be reviewed on an item-by-item basis by the Secretary-General, or by such officials as the Secretary-General so authorizes, for possible declassification when 20 years old. Those not declassified at that time shall be further reviewed, every 5 years thereafter, by the Secretary-General or by such officials as the Secretary-General so authorizes, for possible declassification.

(b) Records that are classified as "confidential" shall be declassified automatically by the Archives and Records Management Section when 20 years old.

4.4 When declassifying information received from an outside source, the Organization shall give due regard to expectations of confidentiality of that outside source and, if appropriate, shall seek the prior consent of the outside source.

Section 5
Handling of classified information

5.1 Heads of departments or offices shall ensure that the following minimal standards are maintained in the handling of classified information received by or originating from their department or office:

(a) All classified information must be transported in sealed envelopes or containers, and clearly marked as such;

(b) All outgoing and incoming classified information must be recorded in a special registry that lists the staff members who are authorized to handle such information;

(c) Classified materials may be duplicated only with the authorization of either their originator or the head of the receiving or originating department or office, and such copies must be entered in the special registry;

(d) All classified information must be filed and stored under lock and key in a secure location within the department or office concerned, accessible only to the authorized staff members;

(e) A hard copy of classified information received in an electronic form must be printed when received, and filed and stored as detailed in subparagraph (d) above. The electronic file must be securely stored in accordance with section 5.4 below;

(f) Electronic transmission of classified information shall be performed only through the use of protected means of communication, in accordance with section 5.4 below.

5.2 With regard to classified information of a recurrent nature (such as situation reports, operational updates and periodic political assessments), departments or offices shall establish standard distribution lists to provide an auditable system for the distribution and control of such information.

5.3 The above minimum standards are without prejudice to the authority of heads of departments or offices to put in place stricter controls over the handling of classified information so long as such controls are consistent with the present bulletin.

5.4 Heads of departments and offices, in cooperation with the Information Technology Services Division of the Department of Management, shall establish procedures to ensure that automated information systems, including networks and telecommunications systems, that collect, create, communicate, compute, disseminate, process or store classified information, have controls that both prevent access by unauthorized persons, and ensure the integrity of the information.

5.5 The destruction by authorized means of non-current, classified documents that have no further administrative, fiscal, legal, historical or other informational value shall be authorized either by the originator or the head of the department or office concerned.

Section 6
Final provisions

6.1 The provisions of the present bulletin shall not apply to the classification and handling of records specifically covered in other Secretary-General's bulletins, other administrative issuances promulgated by the Secretary-General or legal undertakings made by the Organization to third parties.

6.2 Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/272, on security of information, and administrative instruction ST/AI/189/Add.16, on regulations for the control and limitation of documentation: classification and declassification of documents, are hereby abolished.

6.3 The present bulletin shall enter into force on 15 February 2007.

(*Signed*) **Ban** Ki-moon
Secretary-General

United Nations ST/SGB/2007/7

Secretariat

15 February 2007

Secretary-General's bulletin

Organization of the United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States

The Secretary-General, pursuant to Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/1997/5, entitled "Organization of the Secretariat of the United Nations", as amended by Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/2002/11, and for the purpose of establishing the United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States,[1] promulgates the following:

Section 1
General provision

The present bulletin shall apply in conjunction with Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/1997/5, entitled "Organization of the Secretariat of the United Nations", as amended by Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/2002/11.

Section 2
Functions and organization

2.1 The Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States:

(a) Assists the Secretary-General in ensuring the full mobilization and coordination of all entities of the United Nations system, with a view to facilitating the coordinated implementation of and coherence in the follow-up and monitoring of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010 ("Brussels Programme of Action") and the Almaty Programme of Action: Addressing the Special Needs of Landlocked Developing Countries within a New Global Framework for Transit Transport Cooperation for Landlocked and Transit

[1] The mandate of the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States derives from General Assembly resolution 55/279, in which the Assembly endorsed the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010. This resolution was subsequently complemented by Assembly resolution 56/227, whereby the Assembly decided to establish the Office, in accordance with the functions recommended by the Secretary-General in his report (A/56/645).

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Developing Countries ("Almaty Programme of Action") at the country, regional and global levels;

(b) Provides coordinated substantive support to the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council in assessing the progress and conducting the annual review of the implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action and the Almaty Programme of Action;

(c) Supports, as appropriate, the coordinated follow-up of the implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action, the Almaty Programme of Action, the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island States ("Barbados Programme of Action") and the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States ("Mauritius Strategy");

(d) Undertakes appropriate advocacy work in favour of the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, in partnership with the relevant entities of the United Nations system, as well as with the donor community, private sector, civil society, non-governmental organizations, media, academia and foundations;

(e) Assists the Secretary-General in mobilizing international support and resources for the implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action, the Almaty Programme of Action, the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy;

(f) Provides appropriate support to group consultations of least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States.

2.2 The Office is divided into organizational units, as described in the present bulletin.

Section 3
Under-Secretary-General and High Representative

3.1 The Under-Secretary-General and High Representative is accountable to the Secretary-General.

3.2 The Under-Secretary-General and High Representative is responsible for the overall direction, supervision and management of the Office in the implementation of its mandates and approved programme of work. He/she engages in high-level consultations with Member States, organizations of the United Nations system, multilateral financial institutions and civil society groups, and assists the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council in their reviews and assessments of progress achieved in the implementation of the above-mentioned programmes of action for the three groups of countries.

Section 4
Office of the Under-Secretary-General and High Representative

4.1 The Office of the Under-Secretary-General and High Representative is headed by a Director, who deputizes for the Under-Secretary-General and High Representative. The Director is accountable to the Under-Secretary-General and High Representative.

4.2 The core functions of the Office include:

(a) Advising the Under-Secretary-General and High Representative on issues and problems of policy and management;

(b) Acting as focal point for information on all aspects of the work of the Office and ensuring that such information is disseminated internally and projected externally, as appropriate;

(c) Consulting, negotiating and coordinating with other departments, offices, funds and programmes, as well as with non-United Nations entities, on matters of common concern.

Section 5
Policy Development and Coordination, Monitoring and Reporting Service

5.1 The Policy Development and Coordination, Monitoring and Reporting Service is headed by a Chief, who is accountable to the Under-Secretary-General and High Representative.

5.2 The Service consists of three units, one each for the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, respectively.

5.3 The core functions of the Service are as follows:

(a) Monitoring the implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action, the Almaty Programme of Action, the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy;

(b) Reporting annually to the respective legislative organs on the implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action and the Almaty Programme of Action;

(c) Providing substantive support to the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council;

(d) Enhancing and strengthening linkages and partnerships with all constituents and interested parties to mobilize international support and resources in favour of least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, and small island developing States.

Section 6
Advocacy and Outreach Unit

6.1 The Advocacy and Outreach Unit is headed by an Advocacy and Outreach Officer, who is accountable to the Under-Secretary-General and High Representative.

6.2 The core functions of the Unit are as follows:

(a) Assisting the Under-Secretary-General and High Representative in his/her global advocacy activities;

(b) Establishing and strengthening contacts with the private sector and civil society organizations and non-governmental organizations;

(c) Developing advocacy strategies, tools and products, including the website of the Office.

Section 7
Relations with other entities of the United Nations system

To ensure the implementation of the commitments of the Brussels Programme of Action, the Almaty Programme of Action, the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy and to facilitate partnerships with other entities in the Secretariat, the Office is a member of and participates in the meetings of the Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs and the United Nations Development Group. The Office also participates in regional consultation meetings.

Section 8
Final provisions

The present bulletin shall enter into force on 15 February 2007.

(*Signed*) **Ban** Ki-moon
Secretary-General